

CONCLUSION

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distrust of economic motives, belonged to the conditions of a vanished age, but who lacked the creative energy to state them anew, in a form applicable to the needs of a more complex and mobile social order. It was partly that political changes had gone far to identify the Church of England with the ruling aristocracy, so that, while in France, when the crash came, many of the lower clergy threw in their lot with the *tiers Hat*, in England it was rarely that the officers of the Church did not echo the views of society which commended themselves to the rulers of the State. It was partly that, to one important body of opinion, the very heart of religion was a spirit" which made indifference to the gross world of external circumstances appear, not a defect, but an ornament of the soul. Untrammelled by the silken chains which bound the Establishment, and with a great tradition of discipline behind them, the Non-conformist Churches might seem to have possessed opportunities of reasserting the social obligations of religion with a vigour denied to the Church of England* What impeded their utterance was less a weakness, than the most essential and distinctive of their virtues. Founded on the repudiation of the idea that human effort could avail to win salvation, or human aid to assist the pilgrim in his lonely quest, they

saw the
world of business and society as a
battlefield, across
which character could march triumphant
to its goal,
not as crude materials waiting the
architect's hand to
set them in their place as the foundations of
the Kingdom
of Heaven. It did not occur to them that
character is
social, and society, since it is the expression of
character,
spiritual. Thus the eye is sometimes blinded
by light
itself.

The certainties of one age are the
problems of the
next. Few will refuse their admiration to the
magnifi-
cent conception of a community penetrated
from apex
to foundation by the moral law, which was
the inspira-
tion of the great reformers, not less than of
the better